BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **Average weekly earnings in British Columbia edged down for the third time in the last four months, decreasing 0.1% to $617 (seasonally adjusted) between July and August.** The Canadian average rose marginally (+0.2%) to $607 during the same period, as wages increased in seven of the twelve regions. Residents of NWT (-1.7%, to $709) and Yukon (-1.4%, to $673) continued to earn more than other Canadians. Among the other provinces, Ontarians (+0.1%, to $644) and Albertans (+0.3%, to $618) had the highest earnings. Workers in PEI (+0.9%, to $480) had the lowest average weekly earnings in the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Food Expenditures

- **In 1996, households in British Columbia (families and unattached individuals) spent an average of $122 weekly on food purchased in grocery stores and restaurants, more than in any other province.** Households in Quebec ($115) and Alberta ($112) also had weekly food expenditures which were at or above the Canadian average ($112). Food expenditures were lowest in eastern Canada and highest in the west. Households in New Brunswick had the lowest weekly food expenditures ($97). The average for Atlantic Canada was $103. *Source: SC, Catalogue 62-544-XPB*

- **Three out of every four BC households reported purchasing restaurant meals.** These meals accounted for a third ($40) of the average weekly food budget in BC, more than in any other part of the country. Nationally, two-thirds of Canadians reported that they were in the habit of dining out in 1996, and restaurant meals accounted for 28% of the average household's weekly food budget. Eating out was least frequently reported in Newfoundland (52%), where it accounted for only 15% of the food budget. It was most common in BC and Saskatchewan (73%).

  Residents of Vancouver had the highest average restaurant expenditures ($46 per week, or 37% of their food budget) of any metropolitan area in the country. In both Montreal ($35) and Toronto ($31) restaurant meals accounted for less than 30% of weekly food expenditures.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 62-544-XPB

- **Dining out has become increasingly popular among Canadians.** In 1969, Canadian households spent only 15% of their food budget on restaurant meals, about half as much in 1996. People living on their own, and those in the highest income groups, were the most likely to buy restaurant meals. For one-person households in the highest income quintile, restaurant meals amounted to an average of $40 per week, nearly half (47%) their weekly food budget.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 62-544-XPB

Homicides

- **One out of every five homicides reported in Canada last year occurred in British Columbia.** The province's homicide rate (2.91 per 100,000 people) was the highest of any province, but still represented an improvement over 1996 (3.25). The number of homicides reported in the province fell from 125 in 1996 to 114 last year. Canada's homicide rate dropped from 2.12 (635 homicides) to 1.92 (581). Homicide rates were down in every province except Alberta and Nova Scotia.

  PEI was the only province to report no homicides during 1997. Among the other provinces, New Brunswick (1.05) and Newfoundland (1.07) had

Report **BC's labour market**

Did you know...?

Canadians say they spend an average of 13 cents a week (per person) on chocolate bars. At 85 cents a shot, that suggests we eat an average of 8 chocolate bars a year–less than one a month. Hmm.

the lowest homicide rates. In other provinces, rates ranged from 1.56 in Ontario to 2.63 in Manitoba.

Saskatoon (3.59) had the highest homicide rate of any metropolitan area. Among the nine largest areas, rates were highest in Edmonton (3.00), Winnipeg (2.95) and Vancouver (2.54) and lowest in Calgary (1.02) and Ottawa-Hull (1.15).

Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 12

- **Most (94%) of the 533 separate homicide incidents (involving 581 victims) reported in Canada last year involved a single victim.** However, 16% of homicide victims were killed in multiple-victim incidents.

  Fifty of the homicides reported in Canada last year were immediately followed by the suicide of the perpetrator. In 37 of these cases, the murderer was a family member.

  Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 12

- **Firearms were the cause of death for one in every three homicides last year.** The remaining two-thirds of homicides were the result of stabbing (29%), beating (20%), strangulation (9%), fire (5%), poisoning (1%) and shaken baby syndrome (1%) and other causes (2%).

  Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol 18 No 12

Young adults at risk

- **A recent study found that young adults were more likely than teenagers to have engaged in risky behaviours such as binge drinking, smoking, having multiple sexual partners and having unprotected sex.** Most teenagers and young adults had engaged in at least one of the four identified harmful behaviours, and many were involved in two or more. The prevalence of these behaviours increased with age, and was more common among men than women. Men aged 20 to 24 were most at risk. More than one in five (22%) men in this age group reported engaging in at least three of these activities, compared to 17% of women. On the other hand, 19% of men, and 31% of women aged 20 to 24 reported they had not engaged in any of the identified risky activities. *Source: SC, The Daily*

- **Binge drinking (defined as consuming 5 or more alcoholic beverages on at least one occasion) was more common than smoking among young adults.** Just over half (52%) of males, and a third (35%) of females aged 15 to 19 reported at least one episode of binge drinking. This compares to 73% of men, and 51% of women, in the 20 to 24 age group. Forty percent of women and 33% of men in this age group were smokers. *Source: SC, The Daily*

The Nation

- **Canada's all-items industry product price index (IPPI) declined 0.6% between August and September, and was 0.3% lower than in the same month last year.** The most significant price declines were for motor vehicles, pulp, softwood lumber and pork. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canada's economy rebounded in August, with real gross domestic product (GDP) increasing 0.7% (seasonally adjusted) after four months of decline.** The rebound brought the total value of economic activity in Canada back up to the peak level reached in March. The primary reason for the improvement in the Canadian economy was the resolution of labour disputes. Thousands of laid-off auto workers went back to work in August after the settlement of the General Motors strike in the US, which had led to plant shutdowns on this side of the border. This helped boost manufacturing output (+2.8%). Construction activity increased (+1.0%) following the resolution of a labour dispute in southern Ontario. Overall, the goods sector posted its strongest performance since February, with GDP increasing 2.0% from July.

  The service sector remained stagnant for the fourth straight month, growing only marginally (0.1%) in August. The transportation and storage (+1.2%) sector, which was boosted by renewed auto manufacturing and wholesaling activity in the wake of the GM strike, escaped the general malaise, as did the business services (+1.0%) and communications (+0.9%) industries.

  Source: Statistics Canada

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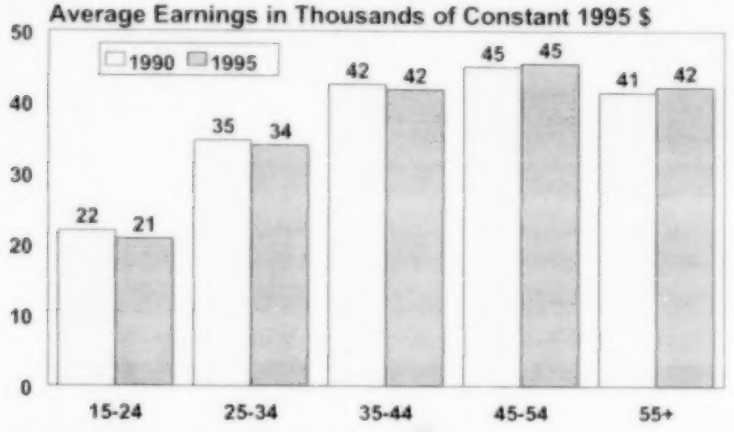
For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

October 30, 1998 Infoline Report: BC's Labour Market

Contact: Anne Kittredge (250) 387-0374
Originally published in June 1998 issue of *Earnings & Employment Trends*. Annual subscription is $60 + GST

BC's Labour Market*
Only the Middle Aged Improved their Earning Capacity Between 1990 and 1995



**Includes only those who worked full-time/full-year*

The 1996 Census collected earnings data for full-time/full-year workers by age and education. The pattern of earnings as shown in the chart above, is as expected -- earning capacity improves with age and work experience. The fall-off in average earnings for the age 55+ is also the norm. The higher paid in the age cohort tend to retire earlier, thus reducing the group's overall average.

Although the change in earnings between 1990 and 1995 does not appear significant for any particular age group, there are substantial differences between the age groups. The young saw a 5 per cent decline in their earnings while the middle aged improved theirs by 1 per cent, a 6 percentage point difference.

BC's Labour Market*
The Young's Earning Capacity Dropped by 5 Per Cent

**Includes only those who worked full-time/full-year*

This pattern of the earnings of the middle aged worker improving, while that for the younger worker deteriorating, is similar to what occurred between 1985 and 1990. This means there has been a 10 year trend, of young workers losing ground to their older co-workers.

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It is interesting to analyze the earnings gap between the 25-34 year olds, and the 45-54 year olds and see how it has changed over time. This provides a comparison between those at the beginning of their careers and those at the peak of their careers.

BC's Labour Market*
The Earnings Gap Between the Young Adult and the Middle Aged Continues to Increase

*Includes only those who worked full-time/full-year

In 1985, the young adult earned 82 cents on every dollar earned by the middle aged. Ten years later it had dropped to 75 cents, despite improving relative education levels of the young,.

Interestingly, the earnings gap between the young and the middle aged University Graduate, is comparatively high. In 1995, the gap was 35 cents per dollar, compared to 20 cents for the high school graduate. This suggests that a university education enables one to climb the ranks more quickly once in the job market. At the beginning of their career, a university graduate earns only 30 per cent more than a high school graduate, but twenty years later, they earn 60 per cent more.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	4,014.3	1.3
Canada	30,300.4	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Aug	2,771	-3.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Aug	2,251	3.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Aug	2,756	-2.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Sep '98	% change on one year ago
BC	110.0	0.0
Canada	108.6	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Sep '98	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,044	0.6
Employed - BC	1,875	1.4
Unemployed - BC	169	-7.5
		Sep '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.3	9.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.3	9.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Oct 28/98	Oct 29/97
Prime Business Rate	7.00	5.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.50	5.65
- 5 year	6.75	6.70
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Oct 28/98	Oct 29/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5521	1.4025
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6443	0.7130
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Aug '98	% change on one year ago
BC	621.04	0.5
Canada	606.91	1.4

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Released this week by BC STATS

- Earnings & Employment Trends, July 1998
- Business Indicators, October 1998
- Current Statistics, October 1998
- Exports, August 1998

Next week

- Tourism Room Revenue, July 1998
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 3rd Qtr 1998

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